The Research Interview.
interview =

question
interview
interrogate
inquiry
investigate
questionnaire
probe
examine
quiz
dig into
query
inspect
canvas

study
survey
dissect
inquest
hearing
ascertain
find out
determine
unearth
detective
interviewer
examiner
investigator
interrogator
cross-examine
Characteristics of the Interview

• 1. *a social interaction*;

• 2. in which the interviewer initiates and controls the exchange;

• 3. to obtain quantifiable and comparable information;

• 4. relevant to an emerging or previously stated hypothesis.
Let’s take these components one at a time---
1. *a social interaction*;
   • all typical social cues exist
     – e.g. fear of evaluation
     – e.g. social influence
   • characteristics of a good interviewer
     – empathy
     – warmth
     – positive regard
     – unintrusive but assertive
Empathy

• most basic: repeat their statements verbatim
• deeper: restate to clarify meaning
• deeper: restate adding feeling tone
• deeper: additive empathy; going “beyond” to state possible meanings that may not be obvious to the interviewee (this is risky)
warmth

• friendly (smiling)
• personal (rather than impersonal)
positive regard

- open
- accepting
- showing faith in the person
intrusive vs. unintrusive

- intrusive (reactive measurement) influences that which is measured

- unintrusive (nonreactive measurement) does not influence that which is measured
If the interviewer influences that which is measured (if he or she is intrusive or the measurement is reactive)

- People tell you what they think you want to hear
- or they tell you the opposite of what they think you want to hear
- the important thing is they don’t tell you “the truth”
Taking notes

- Keep to a minimum unless it’s a phone interview or a scheduled interview with a form checklist.
- Adds to the impact of social influence.
Taking notes

- Keep to a minimum unless it’s a phone interview or a scheduled interview with a form checklist
Taping an interview

- Ask permission
- adds to the impact of social influence
Other ways to be more **unintrusive**?

- make any response seem O.K.
- don’t hint at what you are looking for
- but always think about ethics, should you lie to people?
Social influence.

- Need for social approval
- Impression management
- Evaluation apprehension
  - fear of failure
- Lying (also called “dissimulation”)
The Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale measures “need for social approval”

- contains a long list of statements that most people would agree with but which would make you “look bad” if you agreed.
  - example--”I sometimes enjoy my bowel movements.”
  - true or false

- To what extent is the individual willing to look bad.
Marlow and Crowne reached the following conclusion:

- “People who score high on the Social Desirability Scale have a fabricated self-concept which they have a need to maintain and defend.”
Before going any further -- what **is** lying??

- when words don’t fit reality, that’s lying
- but that can happen for many reasons
ALL STATEMENTS ARE...

Speculation

predict

FACT 1 FACT 2 FACT 3

FACT 2

CRI TERION

Real World
Who am I??

Speculation

Theoretical World

Visible

Invisible

Real World

STATEMENTS

FACT 1 FACT 2 FACT 3

Measurement

predict

CRITERION
in a sense everyone has a fabricated self concept
Another perspective......

Left Hemisphere

Speech tries to represent everything else in the brain but it isn’t always accurate.
Speech tries to represent everything else in the brain but it isn’t always accurate.
Later studies factor analyzing the Marlow-Crowne scale and other similar tests found that:

- there are two factors on these tests
  - 1. lying to self
  - 2. lying to others
“Lying to self”

- People aren’t always aware of their characteristics.
- Sometimes they manage the impression they make on themselves.
“Lying to others”

- sometimes people manage the impression they make on others ("dress for success")
Information known to self?  

Information known to others?  

YES

NO

YES

X

NO
Information known to self?

- YES
- NO

Information known to others?

- YES
- NO

[Diagram with an 'X' in the NO-YES quadrant]
Information known to self?

YES

NO

Information known to others?

YES

“lying to self”

NO

“lying to others”
Intention seems important

• TRYING to misrepresent = lying

• UNINTENTIONALLY misrepresenting = unaware or unconscious
Anyway, the challenge is

- how to find out the “truth” in an interview
Characteristics of the Interview

1. social;

2. *interviewer initiates and controls*;

3. quantifiable and comparable info;

4. emerging or previously stated hypothesis.
2. **interviewer initiates and controls**;

- the interviewer must be assertive
  - but diplomatically so
- low on social anxiety
  - social anxiety can make you defensive (and offensive)
ways to improve your assertiveness

• view your work as a “role” you are playing
• have a plan or an agenda (even a rough one helps)
• keep your agenda in mind
Also since you are in control, remember this general ethical rule of thumb.

- Protect the individual’s privacy

- don’t attach names to data sheets
  - code with an ID that cannot be connected to the individual
  - or can be connected only by you.
Characteristics of the Interview

• 1. social;
• 2. interviewer initiates and controls;
• 3. obtain quantifiable and comparable information;
• 4. emerging or stated hypothesis.
3. *obtain quantifiable and comparable information;*

- **quantifiable**
  - operational definition
  - putting numbers on ideas
sometimes

• you have to do a content analysis on an interview in order to quantify it
  – remember content analysis???
Visible

Invisible
Theoretical constructs, symptoms, indicators, operational definitions
Symptoms, indicators, operational definitions

Theoretical constructs
Psychological characteristics and interview questions

Real World

Theoretical World

Psychological trait or characteristic

CRITERION

Invisible

Predict

Visible

Question 1, question 2, question 3
Theoretical World  

psychological trait or characteristic

Real World

question 1 question 2 question 3

Invisible

predict

Visible

CRITERION
Speculation

Theoretical World

psychological trait or characteristic

question 1 question 2 question 3

Measurement

Visible

Invisible

predict

CRITERION
to obtain quantifiable and comparable information
comparability

Illinois

COMPARE

Texas
ILLINOIS

Texas

COMPARABLE ????

interview question

interview question

interview question

interview question
It all relates to standardization. Sometimes you have to ask different questions of different groups of people to get them to understand you the same.
Characteristics of the Interview

1. social;
2. interviewer initiates and controls;
3. quantifiable and comparable info;
4. relevant to an emerging or previously stated hypothesis.
4. relevant to an *emerging or previously stated hypothesis*.

- *emerging hypothesis*--not sure what you are looking for
- *hypothesis stated a priori*---looking *specifically to test your assumed hypothesis*
emergence

• you don’t know what you’re looking for until you find it
Something is EMERGING
You don’t know what you are looking for until you find it.
PREVIOUSLY STATED (A PRIORI) HYPOTHESIS

Invisible

HYPOTHESIS

Theoretical World

predict

Visible

REAL WORLD

CRITERION
In practice, the process is usually circular.

Theoretical World

HYPOTHESIS

question 1 question 2 question 3

Visible

Invisible

predict

REVISE?

Real World

CRITERION
Some specialized types of interviews:
Focused interview

- concerned with finding out observer or participant experience of some event (e.g. the eruption of Mt. St. Helens, or the entry of U.S. troops into Haiti)
- focused on their reactions to the event (including feelings)
Nowdays, business and politics uses something called focus groups
Elite interview:

- interviewing a famous or powerful person
- allows the interviewee to guide the interview
Phone interviews.

- reduces the impact of social influence since they can’t see you
- but you have to keep them from hanging up and you usually want to be very standardized
standardized vs. unstandardized interviews

- interview guide versus interview schedule
interview guide

• rough guidelines
• less structured; less precise than a schedule
• give the interviewer a lot of latitude
• teach the interviewers “what sort of thing you are looking for,” “what your purpose is in general”
interview schedule

• strict, specific
• more structured; more precise
• teach the interviewers to follow the schedule (the list of questions) precisely
So what kind of data are you likely to get from guided vs. scheduled interviews?

- Remember above it said less precise (guide) and more precise (schedule)
- Remember levels of meas.
  - nominal
  - ordinal
  - interval
  - ratio

- So guides = more nominal data
  - schedules = more ordinal, interval, ratio
What does it all mean?

Standardized

Unstandardized

HYPOTHESIS DRIVE

EMERGENT
When is a guided interview more appropriate than a scheduled one?

- for pilot work
- for exploratory work
- for emergent research
- to cover sensitive topics
- to deal with diverse groups
- for development of a more scheduled interview procedure
  - a guide often leads to a schedule later in the research
Preparing interviewers to do a guided interview:

- spend a lot of time on the purpose, the main question, the main concern
- then do a lot of role playing and let the guide evolve as you share your experience with one another
When preparing an interview guide or schedule ask yourself:

- What am I doing this for?
- What questions will get me the info I need?
- Who would be most likely to have the info I need?
- What strategy is most effective with them?
- What types of questions are likely to be asked of me?
- What further questions are these likely to suggest on my part?
“Interactive, elaborative, or dynamic” use of a schedule:

- a two-way interaction
- let the interviewee indicate problems, understandings, etc. regarding the questions you are asking
- similar to “dynamic testing”
With regard to individual differences:

• How different are the interviewees?
• If different, can you find a way to achieve equivalent meanings?
• Can you even recognize who is who?